

THE STORY

OF THE

Nationalist-Conservative Alliance

TOLD BY

HENRI BOURASSA, THE NATIONALIST LEADER

**AN INSIDE HISTORY OF INTEREST
TO EVERY CANADIAN**

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The Nationalist-Conservative Alliance.

A Story of Political Intrigue

In a recent series of fourteen articles contributed to his own paper, "Le Devoir," Henri Bourassa, the Nationalist Leader in Quebec, has expounded the theories of Nationalism, its inception, its development, and the secret history of the "unholy alliance" entered into by Mr. Borden with the Nationalists in 1910 and during the election campaign of 1911.

Though disclaiming the existence of a regular covenant with the Tory leaders, so far as the Nationalists are concerned, Mr. Bourassa's statements prove the close union of Conservatives and Nationalists in the effort to defeat Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and any policy of naval aid to Great Britain. **In the Province of Quebec, by appeals to prejudice and an enormous amount of money supplied by leading Conservatives, the alliance was successful in electing 21 opponents of Laurier.** But as the sin usually carries its own punishment, so Mr. Bourassa now bewails the treachery of the men elected as a result of the unholy alliance. From the facts adduced by Mr. Bourassa, it is clear that Mr. Borden's emergency contribution was inspired not by any genuine desire to relieve the mother country, but rather as a consequence of the pledges made with his knowledge and consent, by the Nationalist and Conservative candidates under pressure of Bourassa.

THE PRINCIPLES OF NATIONALISM.

Writing in *Le Devoir*, May 16th, 1913, Mr. Bourassa says, in part: "The Nationalist League was organized in March, 1903.

"One month later we opened our campaign in Quebec, with a huge meeting in the drill hall. A programme of the League had been printed and distributed in advance. Among other articles could be found the following:—

(a) No participation by Canada in imperial wars outside her territory.

(b) **To spurn any attempt at recruiting for British troops.**

(c) **To oppose the establishment in Canada of a naval school with the help and for the benefit of imperial authorities.**

(d) Control over our militia and military colleges in time of war as in time of peace and **for the defence of our territory exclusively.** Refusal to grant leave of absence to any militia officer in order that he may take part in any imperial war.

(e) Appointment by the Canadian Government of a Canadian officer as head of our militia."

"It is upon these principles that we opposed the Naval Law of 1910."

"L'Evenement" (The present Postmaster-General's paper in Quebec) spoke very eulogistically of the League, its programme and the man (Mr. Bourassa) who had presented it."

THE FIRST OVERTURES.

In Le Devoir, 20th May, 1913, Mr. Bourassa says: "In order to complete the story of our dealings with the statesmen and patriots who are denouncing us to-day, I shall mention here that two years previously (1906) Sir Adolphe Caron had urged me to join an important group of Conservatives desirous of resuscitating the honourable traditions of their party, and, if need be, to enter upon an alliance with a Liberal group. I learned from him that **the promoter of the movement was Sir Hugh Graham, owner of the Montreal "Star,"** who prophesied that I could eventually become Prime Minister if I so desired.

"It is true that at that time Mr. Graham was not knighted."

EVOLUTION OF THE ALLIANCE.

In Le Devoir, May 27th, 1913, Mr. Bourassa tells the story of the Drummond-Arthabaska election and the evolution of the alliance with the Conservative party.

He says: "**The second meeting** (of the League) **took place at St-Henri (Montreal) at the invitation of Mr. Louis Coderre, at present Secretary of State.** Similar declarations were made, the same principles were pleaded, the same resolution read and endorsed.

"This time it was Mr. Coderre, who, in the role of Peter, disowned Mr. Borden. No doubt he must have heard the cock crow when he took up Mr. Monk's portfolio, 18 months later.

"In 1910 he had shot his arm up as among those who expressed disapproval of the Naval Law and the "no less nefarious policy" of Mr. Borden. Shortly after he chose to run as "autonomist" candidate, and in 1911 **carried the seat as a follower of Mr. Monk.**

"Every subsequent meeting was a repetition of the first.

"'The German peril is but a lure,' 'Away with the red and the blue rags,' pleaded at Vaudreuil, Mr. Sevigny, member for Dorchester and Solicitor-General to-be. 'We are satisfied that the majority of the people would reject both the naval bill and Mr. Borden's propositions, had they an opportunity to vote upon it.' So spoke, at Longue-Pointe, Mr. Coderre, now a minister of the Tory government. To his mind Mr. Monk's policy was the only acceptable one.

"'We hold nothing in common with either party,' said Mr. Pate-naude, local member for Laprairie at St-Remi, to-day official organizer for the Federal Conservative party.

"To accumulate anecdotes and quotations would be tedious. In the forefront of those who have just lately voted for the principle of a contribution, which they then so bitterly assailed, are found Nantel, Coderre,

Blondin, Seigny, Paquet, Rainville, Lesperance. One and all repeatedly endorsed resolutions purporting to condemn the Naval Law and the no less nefarious policy of Mr. Borden."

MR. BORDEN TAKES THE PLUNGE.

After referring to the result of the Drummond-Arthabaska election, Mr. Bourassa continues:—

"The time had come, it seemed to us, to debate the question upon a wider sphere, and **we accordingly prepared an amendment to the motion in reply to the address. Mr. Monk laid it before the House on the 22nd of November, 1910.**

"This amendment called for popular 'vote on the government naval policy and the general question of the participation of Canada in Imperial armaments.'

"Mr. Borden moved a sub-amendment in which he reiterated the assurance of our devotion to the Empire, and censured the Government for its failure to consult the people upon the 'naval policy.'

"After his motion had been defeated by the combined votes of the Liberals and those of Messrs. Monk, Nantel, Blondin, Paquet, Lortie and Gilbert, **the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Borden) and all his followers, barring Mr. Foster and Col. Hughes, supported Mr. Monk's amendment.**

"By this vote the whole Conservative party shifted their position from the ground taken in February, 1910, on which occasion they had expressed the wish to confine the need for popular consultation upon a permanent policy only. They also disregarded the lines set forth in Mr. Borden's amendment, which suggested popular consultation upon "the" naval policy; besides binding themselves to the principle calling for a plebiscite on any measure of 'contribution to Imperial armaments.' Mr. Borden had even gone so far as to approve of Mr. Monk's proposal of a plebiscite. Later, did he not countenance his word by calling into his cabinet three ministers elected upon the pledge that the existing naval law must be repealed, and that no other policy would be adopted unless previously endorsed by the people?"

THE SECRET COMPACT.

Continuing his revelations, Mr. Bourassa says in *Le Devoir*, May 29th, 1913: "During the session of 1910-11 two **leaders of the Conservative party requested that I meet them** at the house of a mutual friend of ours.

"Here is an exact summary of the interview. The envoys opened as follows:—

'The Nationalists say they are fighting, as we do, the Liberal government, but their stand upon Reciprocity embarrasses us to a great extent. Were we to unite our efforts primarily against Reciprocity, **it is quite possible that an understanding, satisfactory to both parties, could be arrived at on the naval question** since we are one on the point of popular consultation. If you press the naval question in Quebec it may provoke a display of loyalism on the extremist wing of our party. If Reciprocity be but a subordinate issue with you, the difference between us might broaden still more, for the sole benefit of the Common foe. At

the time of a general election, candidates will come forward who, while opposing the naval law will support Reciprocity; yet, others indifferent about Reciprocity will come out against the naval policy of both parties. This would be a puzzling situation for us. If we support the independent candidates, we shall be open to the charge of playing a double game. On the other hand, **if we bring forward a third man—a straight Conservative—the government candidate will get in between.**

"Mine was a decisive answer," says Mr. Bourassa. 'The Tories and Nationalists,' said I, 'Can have nothing in common. Mr. Monk and his group have had our support because of their pledge to oppose the naval policy of both parties until submitted for the people's verdict. **Since Drummond-Arthabaska, Mr. Borden has come nearer Mr Monk; he has practically endorsed his plan of a plebiscite. This is the only ground upon which we can meet** Should you be returned to power, you must consult the people apart from a general election, and the complex questions which always arise at such times. It would only remain for us to accept the verdict of the majority should it endorse the naval law or any other plan of contribution to Imperial defence. Always retaining, of course, the right to advocate our views in order to induce the country to reverse its decision. The Naval question will always be to the front. **Not being a party, we will not bring forward any candidate, but we will heartily support any man, whether Liberal or Conservative, Pro-Reciprocityist, or Anti-Reciprocityist, provided he pledges himself to resist any plan of direct or indirect participation in Imperial wars, outside of Canada, or at least oppose such measure until submitted for popular verdict by way of a plebiscite; the welfare of either party is for us of no moment. It is up to Mr. Borden and his lieutenants to decide whether to secure the seat for a ministerial candidate by entering a three-cornered fight, or suffer the election of the candidate whom we shall support.**'

"I have no doubt," concludes Mr. Bourassa, "that the High Priest and Sanhedrin accepted the situation, since **the fight was carried out according to our terms.**"

THE FIRST PLAN OF JOINT CAMPAIGN.

In Le Devoir, May 30th, Mr. Bourassa tells how Mr. Borden and the Tory leaders carried out their part of the alliance.

"As elections drew nearer," says Mr. Bourassa, "**we had ample proof that the Conservative leaders were quite satisfied with the situation which the Nationalist campaign had forced upon them.** The Monk group came out as the "autonomist" party with its complete organization, headquarters and committees distinct from the Conservative party proper.

"The Tory General Committee allotted the autonomist party most of the ridings in the Province of Quebec, retaining for themselves the English-speaking counties of the Eastern Townships, besides Pontiac, Argenteuil and three Montreal divisions; St. Antoine, Ste. Anne and St. Laurent.

"It was distinctly agreed that with these exceptions Mr. Monk had exclusive charge of the whole Province, with the right

to accept or refuse prospective candidates; with the understanding that such candidates as were approved of must fight as best they could the Naval Law and the 'no less nefarious policy' of Mr. Borden; that **on Reciprocity they could take whatever stand they chose, and that they should nevertheless receive from the Conservative party their wholehearted support.**"

DETAILS OF THE ALLIANCE.

Continuing the story in *Le Devoir*, June 2nd, 1913, Mr. Bourassa tells of the details of the alliance in the Eastern Townships and in Ontario.

"The most obvious proof," he says, "that the Conservative party had surrendered to Nationalist sentiment was to be found in the Eastern Townships. Through that district, with the exception of Drummond-Arthabaska, no Nationalist or 'autonomist' candidates had been brought out. We took no part in the fight. Local committees and the electors generally took upon themselves to spread our principles. **Such favor had Nationalism gained in public opinion that Conservative candidates, both English and French, had seen fit, willingly or not, to grant our doctrine considerable way.**

"Mr. James Davidson, Conservative candidate in Shefford, issued a manifesto which contained the following paragraphs:—

"I declare that, if elected on the 21st of September, I shall oppose and vote against any Prime Minister, of whatever party, who will endeavor to maintain the Naval Law as adopted in 1910, without, beforehand, giving the people of Canada an opportunity to express their opinion thereon by means of a special referendum.

"I shall, if elected, see to it that the rights of the French-speaking Catholic minority are recognized and respected everywhere, as are the rights of the English-speaking minority in the Province of Quebec. I endorse separate schools, recognition of the French language, etc., etc.

"**Mr. Davidson asked for my personal support. Similar declarations were made by Mr. Pickel in Mississquoi. All the others eventually did the same.**"

TORY MONEY FOR NATIONALISTS.

To the clamoring candidates who were praying that Mr. Bourassa speak at a big local rally at Sherbrooke, the **Conservative Organizer** suggested that **Mr. Borden should come alone, since it might create a bad impression in English-speaking provinces to see Borden and Bourassa on the same platform.** Here is the answer he received, according to Mr. Bourassa: "The trouble is, as one said, that we do not need Borden to win, but we do need Bourassa."

"A few days later," he continues, "there came to our office **one of the most prominent members of the Conservative party**, carrying under his arm the Voters' Lists of all the Eastern ridings. He **paid into our hands subscription to "Le Devoir" for thousands and thousands of electors.** We asked nothing but the regular subscription price, deducting therefrom the ordinary commission paid to agents. **We thus enjoyed the satisfaction of using Tory money to circulate the good Nationalist gospel everywhere.**

"During the last days of the campaign, three delegates of the Conservative Committee at Sherbrooke, two English-Canadians and one French-Canadian, came to urge me to fire the last shots on behalf of their candidates—'All pledged,' said they, 'to a referendum on the navy question, whatever party is in power.'

"I had to decline, having promised the very short time still left to the Conservative candidates of Nipissing and East Algoma."

COCHRANE AND BOURASSA.

Here is another interesting episode of the campaign. "On the occasion of that memorable meeting at St. Hyacinthe," on the 13th of August, continues Mr. Bourassa, "I had met **a number of the most important Conservatives and Nationalists** from Northern Ontario. They had **come especially for the purpose of inviting me** to deliver two or three speeches in their district. If I remember well, **they had a letter from Mr. Cochrane, the present Minister of Railways and Canals. At any rate, the invitation was conveyed on his behalf.**

"Soon after I received a renewed invitation, enclosing the following message:—

Chas. McCrea,
Sudbury, Ont.

Mattawa, Ont., Sept. 8, 1911.

I certainly am opposed to Reciprocity pact and will support request for repeal of Naval Policy, **and a Referendum to the people, no matter who is Premier.**

GEORGE GORDON.

Chas. McCrea,
Sudbury, Ont.

Providence Bay, Sept. 8th, 1911

I am opposed to Reciprocity pact. I am opposed to Naval Policy of Liberal government. I will support request for repeal of same, and **Referendum to the people on Naval Question, no matter who is Premier.**

W. R. SMYTH.

"Mr. Gordon was former Conservative member for Nipissing and Mr. Smyth, Conservative, for East Algoma. Both were in the field once more.

"**On the strength of these explicit pledges I promised to support their candidatures** with two speeches, one in French, the other in English. On the 18th of September I spoke at Sudbury.

"**Mr. Cochrane, usually very shy of his compliments, has since done me the honor of telling me that my arguments had made a deep impression, deeper still among English-speaking than French-speaking people.**

"Both Mr. Gordon and Mr. Smyth were returned. A few weeks later Mr. Gordon became a Senator, and Mr. Cochrane took his constituency, to become Minister of Railways and Canals in the Borden Government. I do not know that Mr. Cochrane accepted the legacy without its liabilities. **He never repudiated the pledges entered into by Mr. Gordon with his (Mr. Cochrane's) knowledge and approval.**.....

"Considering the facts related above, the truthfulness of which I vouch for, what ensued?

"In every riding where the naval question was debated in 1911—this would represent about one-fourth of the electoral districts of the Dominion—the candidates, whether Nationalists or "autonomist" denounced it strongly and pledged their support of a referendum.

"Every Nationalist or "autonomist" candidate deprecated the Liberal Policy—a so-called Canadian navy—and the Conservative Policy—emergency contribution—as well.

"The Conservative party made use of its funds, and indirectly fostered the chances of such candidates as had declared themselves opposed to both policies. Outside of these ridings, the battle was fought on Reciprocity alone."

BORDEN'S TREACHERY.

"The only apparent mandate," concludes Mr. Bourassa, "Mr. Borden and the majority can claim is the obligation to repeal the Naval Law. They have another, though partial and indirect, namely to submit to the people by way of referendum any policy of contribution to imperial armaments. Only for the treacherous conduct of a score of ministers and members, it could not have been voted. The pledge which those people have now broken had been given with the full knowledge of the Tories who used it as a stepping-stone to power."

Incriminating as these statements are, what is not less significant than the revelations themselves is the fact that they have never received any kind of a denial from Mr. Borden or any member of his Cabinet. Nor, indeed, has any Conservative journal attempted to assert that Mr. Bourassa has spoken other than the truth. The presence of the Nationalist, ministers in his Cabinet, his "emergency" policy and the care with which Mr. Borden has avoided any reference to Nationalist tactics, shows that he is still relying upon Nationalist aid to keep him in power. For the Prime Minister of a British Dominion to remain silent in the face of charges which brand him as guilty of the most dishonest, disloyal and treacherous conduct to both Canada and the Empire, is for him to admit the accusation, and is the strongest possible self-condemnation.

THE ELECTOR'S OPPORTUNITY.

In the light of what Mr. Bourassa has disclosed, it must be apparent that this treachery on the part of the Prime Minister, and his followers in Quebec, will be continued just so long as the people fail to show in an unmistakable manner their resentment of all such tactics. To support Mr. Borden's candidate in the light of these revelations is to condone the offence, and is equivalent to declaring that loyalty and honesty have become by-words in Canadian public life. To vote against Mr. Borden's candidate is to hasten the day when discreditable conduct of this kind shall no longer find a place in the methods of either political party in Canada.

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